



One Hundred Fourteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On Sunday, January 11, 2015, your administration announced it will “will host a Summit on Countering Violent Extremism [CVE]” next month, focused on both domestic and international efforts to fight violent extremism. The Committee – which is conducting an ongoing review of Federal CVE efforts – is supportive of any effort to improve our CVE policies and programs and is therefore hopeful this event increases our ability to “understand, identify, and prevent the cycle of radicalization” and improves the security of the United States’ Homeland. However, the rumored delays associated with this event as well other concerns prompt questions regarding precisely what your staff hopes to achieve with this summit and how exactly it will be achieved.

In particular, I write to ask:

1. What are the specific objectives of this summit?
 - a. In the announcement of this upcoming summit, your staff noted that this summit will “build” on the CVE strategy released in 2011 (entitled “Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States”). Is the administration considering specific changes to this strategy or the corresponding implementation plan? If yes, what are they? If not, why not?
 - b. The statement released by your staff announcing this event cites recent attacks in Ottawa, Sydney, and Paris as “imperative” to the focus of this summit. This provides the impression that it took attacks in foreign countries to draw your attention to the threat posed by violent Islamist extremism. Given that every one of those attacks was carried out on behalf of the same jihadist ideology espoused by al Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and others, and has served as the motivation for several attacks in

the US Homeland – will this summit be solely dedicated to countering the violent Islamist extremist narrative?

2. I have written to you previously expressing my concern that our national CVE efforts suffer from a lack of clear (and therefore accountable) leadership. Toward that end, who in your administration is managing the planning and organization of this summit, and are they also responsible for leading CVE operational efforts for your administration?

It is worth emphasizing my belief that this event has the potential to improve our CVE efforts – provided that it is more than just a photo-op. I urge you to hold your administration accountable both in seeing that this summit provides useful benefits to our CVE efforts, but also that those same efforts are supported with clear leadership, as well as adequate and identified resources, budgeting, and personnel. There have been too many wake up calls recently for your administration to not take every possible action to stop violent Islamist extremism in America. Therefore, I ask that you please ensure this summit provides actual results to counter this threat.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Chairman